ral sector stations in Eastern Region in favour of States/UTs in the Northern, Eastern, Western, Southern and North Eastern Regions to the extent possible depending on the requirement of States/UTs and availabiiity of transmission lines.

(ii) A Committee headed by Member (PS), Central Electricity Authority has recommended an Action Plan for maximising export of surplus power from Eastern Region (ER) to neighboring regions. The Committee has recommended long term allocation of surplus power of ER to the neighboring regions with payment of fixed charges in proportion to capacity allocation and energy charges payable in proportion to actual energy drawal with a view to motivate drawee States to maintain their drawal on continuous basis. HVDC back to back station at Sasaram connecting Eastern with Northern Region is expected to be commissioned by March, 2002 and would enable export of additional power from the region.

(c) The Government has approved the Sasaram HVDC back to back link between Eastern and Northern Regions at an estimated cost of Rs. 671.56 crores, based on 3rd quarter of 1997 price level. The process of award for transmission line as well as HVDC station has been initiated. The project is scheduled to be completed in December, 2001.

(d)-The feasibility report for Rourkele—Raipur 400 KV D/C line, for interconnecting Eastern and Western Regions, has been submitted to CBA for techno economic clearance. The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 298 Crores.

Electricity generation tax in Himachal Pradesh

2590. SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether some proposals to levy Electricity generation tax in Himachal Pradesh are pending with the Ministry;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor with effective date of pendency;

(c) whether Government propose to take some decision on these pending proposals enabling the State Government to increase its financial resources as suggested by Shri C. Rangarajan Expert Committee constituted on 31st August, 1992; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (d) The Himachal Pradesh Electricity (Tax on generation) Bill, 1995 passed by the Government of H.P. was received by the Union Government on 20-11-1995 for presidential assent. As the Government of Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana had opposed the levy of such a tax by the State of Himachal Pradesh, it was decided to withhold the Presidential assent to the Bill. The Government of India is considering the enactment of a legislation for the levy of a cess on generation of electricity, the proceeds of which will be shared with the State Governments.

New Power Project in North Cachar Hills district in Assam

2591. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal for setting up a power project in Lower Kopili River of North Cachar Hills district in the State of Assam?

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project (3 × 50 = 150 MW) located in the North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong Districts of Assam envisages construction of a 71.35 mtrs. high concrete gravity dam across Kopili river. The impounded water is proposed to be fed through a 7.5 mtr. dia. and 3.564 Km long head race tunnel to a semi-underground indoor type power house with installation of 3 Units of 50 MW each. The project has been identified to be executed as a Central sector project by North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO) for benefits during 10th Five Year Plan. The investment approval for the Project will be accorded by Central Government after completion of modalities like signing of Memorandum of Understanding between State Government of Assam and NEEPCO and obtaining techno-economic clearance from the Central Electricity Authority and other statutory clearances etc. by NEEPCO.

Joint Power Sector Projects in Collaboration with Financial Institutions

2592. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether some financial institutions are keen to make investment in the power sector;

(b) whether they propose to set up joint sector projects;

(c) if so, the names of financial institutions keen to make investment in the private/public sector power projects; and

(d) the details of the projects identified in the public/private sector for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (d) The Indian Financial Institutions (IFIs) and Banks are the main lenders for financing the private power projects in the country. Even though the financial institutions by themselves are not setting up joint sector power projects, some of them are participating in the form of fund based/non-fund based assistance for setting up power projects in the private sector. The identification by the IFIs of the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) who would be receiving financial assistance depends, inter-alia, on the latters receiving the requisite security packages like Letter of Credit, Escrow facility and State Guarantee from the concerned State Governments for timely payment of IPPs dues by the State Electricity Boards for energy consumed by them.

Constitution of SAARC Power Grid

2593. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to set up a SAARC power grid in the sub-continent;

(b) if so, whether consent of all the SAARC countries has been obtained; and

(c) if so, when this grid is likely to come into existence?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (c) There is a proposal for setting up electrical interconnections between India and neighbouring countries. Electrical interconnections with Nepal and Bhutan are already in existence. Bilateral discussions are being held for setting up interconnections with Bangladesh and Pakistan.